

# SCOTTISH ART REVIEW



VOL. VII No. 1

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IAN *Mac Nicol* GALLERIES



SCOTTISH LANDSCAPE BY PATRICK NASMYTH (1787-1831)

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# The SCOTTISH ART REVIEW

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Illustration on cover—SAINT NICOLAS-DU-CHARDONNET, PARIS (watercolour) by WILLIAM WILSON, R.S.A.



DETAIL showing FORTUNE, blind-folded, guided by TEMPERANCE  
from *Prudence arrives at the Court of Divine Wisdom*

*Tapestry woven in Brussels, early 16th century*  
15 x 26½ feet

*Burrell Collection*



## NEW BURRELL ACQUISITIONS

WITH NO HOME and all its splendid tapestries in store, the acquisition by the Burrell Collection of two very large 'Gothic' tapestries must be considered an act of Faith rather than of Prudence.

However, with a bit of luck, or to employ the language of the French *rhétoriciens* of which the tapestries are a visual counterpart, if Fortune is guided by Temperance and Fortitude (the latter figure just missing in illustration on opposite page) the day will surely come when the Burrell Collection is accorded its own Temple of Honour.

The illustration shows a central portion of the finer of the two tapestries and the only one of the four sold from the collection of the Duc de Meppem which is complete. It is woven in wool and silk (without the addition of gold thread) from the same cartoon as the tapestry, one of a set of nine, in the Spanish royal collections (Count Viusto de Valencia de Don Juan, *Tapices de la Corona de Espana*, Madrid, 1903, plate 39).

In the upper left hand corner Prudence in a chariot driven by Reason is drawn by five horses representing the Senses towards the temple of Divine Wisdom, whose court is thronged with personifications of the virtues, prophets, sages and heroes. The architecture of the Temple—a three-sided cloister with turrets and a tiled roof—is a fantastic mixture of Gothic and Renaissance motives typical of the transitional period of which the tapestry is a product.

In one of the tapestries at Madrid occurs the figure of a seated scribe whom Emile Mâle identified as the probable inventor of the immensely elaborate iconographical scheme. The most likely person in his opinion for this task was the poet, Jean Lemaire de Belges, author of the allegorical poem, "Le Temple d'Honneur et de Vertus" and the chief literary figure at the court of Margaret of Austria from 1507 to 1513, when he believed the tapestries to have been conceived. Another



DETAIL of MOHAMMED from *Faith Enthroned above the Victorious Virtues*. Tapestry woven in Brussels early 16th century. 15 × 23½ feet  
Burrell Collection

of his books, *Illustrations de Gaule et Singularites de Troie* is known to have provided the literary source of a series of tapestries at Beauvais. The designer of the cartoons is unknown, but he may well have been Bernard van Orley (c.1491-1542) the painter and prolific designer of tapestries and stained glass who in 1518 became court painter to Margaret of Austria the regent of the Netherlands.

The second tapestry from the same series, which has been slightly cut down on either side, shows the central figure of Faith, enthroned above the Victorious Virtues, welcoming the heroes of antiquity.

Brussels weaving of the early 16th century is already represented by some important tapestries and fragments of tapestries including a Credo, an Adoration of the Virgin, a Solomon and Sheba, and a Jacob and Rachel.

Lady Burrell and her fellow Trustees have consented to allow the two tapestries to be shown for a brief period at the Glasgow Art Gallery where they can be seen until the 20th December.

## TWO ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS IN THE LIBRARY OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY

OF THE less well known art treasures in Scotland, two of the most important are undoubtedly the illuminated Islamic manuscripts in the library of Edinburgh University. One, Raschid-ed-din's *Jami at Tawarikh* (No. 20), is a large folio volume containing about seventy illustrations; a second volume of the same book belongs to the Royal Asiatic Society. The other, the *al-Athar al-Baqiyah* or ancient history of al-Biruni (No. 161) is of rather smaller format—it might be described as a large quarto—and contains twenty-four illustrations. The texts of both are in Arabic, and both were written in A.H. 707, that is, 1306 or 1307 A.D. The style of their miniatures is, however, in the main distinct.

The paintings in the *al-Biruni* are in a heavy, colourful style, and show clearly enough their descent from work of the thirteenth century, of what is usually called the Mesopotamian or Baghdad school. The most important manuscripts of this group are made up of a number of copies of a book of travel, the *Travels of Hariri*, as well as of one or two Natural Histories, and they are divided between a number of collections. But they are all in a very definite, distinctive manner, which constitutes the earliest school of Islamic book illustration that we know. The style no doubt ultimately derived from that of the Christian manuscripts of Syria with texts in Syriac, and these were related to, though not necessarily derived from, contemporary or earlier Byzantine books.

The *al-Biruni* manuscript is especially interesting because it not only shows us the development of this style in the early fourteenth century, but also because among its illustrations there are depicted a number of scenes from the Bible story, though the version of the story is not always exactly the same as in the Bible. The Annunciation

(*f.* 141 v) and the Baptism of Christ (*f.* 140 v) may be noted. In the former (Fig. 1) the Virgin is shown seated cross-legged on the floor, within a building, while the Angel, on her left, stands outside, with the blue sky behind him. Both are essentially 'Moslem' figures, and the whole conception of the scene is eastern. The Baptism (Fig. 2) is equally oriental, alike in the costumes, the facial types and the way in which the water and the landscape background are shown.

The illustrations of the *Jami at Tawarikh* are in quite a different style, which owes less to the 'Mesopotamian' school and more to the far East. There is, however, a good deal of variation, and the paintings in the book are clearly not all by the same hand. They reflect very clearly the spirit of the age in which they were produced, for the Mongols, advancing from the East, had brought with them new ideas, though they had also taken into their service the population of the regions they had conquered, more especially so far as artists and artisans were concerned. They may have erected pyramids of skulls outside the towns they captured, but they were zealous patrons of art, and spared the lives of any men who were likely to be useful to them.

The subject matter of this book is much more diverse than that of the *al-Biruni*, for it is a 'universal history', and its material was drawn from the Koran, the Bible, from Persian legend, and from records of contemporary events. Some Christian scenes appear, for example the Annunciation again (*f.* 23). But it is rendered in a manner quite different from that of the *al-Biruni*; Mary is fetching water from a well, and the angel, in the form of a man, stands to her right; behind is a rocky landscape. The story thus follows a slightly different text from that of the Bible, though the mountains, and to some extent the



THE ANNUNCIATION and (below) THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

From Islamic ms. *Ancient History of al-Biruni*



costumes also, owe a distant debt to Byzantine ideas. The rendering of another Bible theme, Jonah and the Whale (f. 23 v) is rather closer in style to work in the al-Biruni. The story is the familiar one, and is told in a straightforward manner, but also with astonishing insight and expression (Fig. 3). The great fish, swirling and lashing in the water, is particularly effective, and contrasts admirably with the pensive figure of the Prophet, reclining beneath his gourd-tree.

Lighter and more linear in style is another picture which illustrates a Koranic version of the story of the Prophet Jeremiah (f. 13 v). According to the text, the Prophet had doubted God's power to raise Jerusalem again after its destruction, and the Almighty had therefore caused him to lie dead for a hundred years in a barren desert. When he came to life his food was made fresh, while his donkey, which he first saw as no more than a few dry bones, was brought to life before his eyes (Fig. 4). It is shown in the picture in the process of integrating itself. The tale is told with the same vividness as that of Jonah, but the style is distinct, for the touch is more

*Two Islamic Manuscripts in the Library of Edinburgh University*  
eastern, and the tree might well have been drawn by a Chinese artist.

This far-eastern manner is very much to the fore in many illustrations in the book, while others again are more purely Mongol. The large peaked hats which appear so often, for example, follow a Mongol fashion, while the chequered costumes of many of the figures, especially in the latter part of the book, are again Central Asian. An actual stuff which is preserved in the Topkapu Saray Museum at Istanbul and which is supposed to have been the costume of Tamerlane, may be compared. These chequered garments are worn by some of the figures in a fine miniature depicting the birth of Mohammed (f. 42, Fig. 5), though other figures in the same pictures are clothed in costumes which would seem to have been inspired by Byzantine models.

The diverse styles which we see in the illustrations of this book were soon to blend, to form that new and very lovely manner which was so essentially Persian, and which we know from a mass of manuscripts of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



JONAH AND THE WHALE

From Islamic ms. *Raschid-ed-din's Jami at Tawarikh*





THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

It is a style of great delight and loveliness. Here in these early books we see something which is more embryonic in character. It is still a style in formation. But books of this period are extremely rare, and Edinburgh is fortunate in possessing two of the most important examples of the age that survive.

From Islamic ms. *Raschid-ed-din's Jami at Tawarikh*

Nowhere else can the genesis of Persian painting be so completely studied in one library.

*The cost of the illustrations of this article has been met by a very generous donation from the National Bank of Scotland.*



THE BIRTH OF MOHAMMED

From Islamic ms. *Raschid-ed-din's Jami at Tawarikh*



ROBIN HUTCHISON

## THE COLLECTION OF PICTURES AT DUNROBIN CASTLE

GENERALLY speaking the older private collections of pictures in Scotland are uniform in pattern, basically an accumulation of family portraits plus subject pictures acquired by various members of the family. The portraits usually demonstrate a



ALLAN RAMSAY

WILLIAM, 17TH EARL OF  
SUTHERLAND (1735-66)  
*Oil on canvas, 96 x 60 ins.*

fairly regular pattern of patronage, variation occurring when one member spent periods of his life in England or abroad, and English or foreign artists' work appears in the gallery. The subject pictures, on the other hand, show no such regularity. Few if any families have shown a continuous interest in picture collect-

ing through their various generations, and the collections reflect the wildly varying tastes and inclinations of the last three hundred years. Naturally private collections vary greatly in quality, depending on the means, interest and opportunity of those who help to make them, but they are worthy of study as they show many aspects of the history of painting and taste which cannot be seen in any public collection in this country. Public collections show the taste and interest of professional art historians and connoisseurs over a limited period of time, as few public collections in this country are over one hundred years old, and, naturally, a preference has been given to works of the acknowledged great masters. On the other hand the private collections reflect the taste of all the generations of the last three hundred years, and are the only places where can be found the works of lesser known artists, many of whom were of great merit.

The collection at Dunrobin, the property of His Grace the Duke of Sutherland, is perhaps one of the least well known of the private collections in Scotland, but is one of very great interest. It is, of course, only part of the Sutherland Collection—the larger proportion is in England—but sufficient is housed in Dunrobin to give an indication of the development of the collection. The portraits represent both the Scottish and English descent of the family—the Earls of Sutherland and the English family of Leveson-Gower, Marquises of Stafford, the two families which were united by the marriage of Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland in her own right, to George Leveson-Gower, eldest son of the 1st Marquis of Stafford in 1785.

Thus a progression of portraits by both English and Scottish painters from the 17th to the 19th centuries can be seen, varying from magnificent examples of Ramsay, Romney, Lawrence and Michael Wright to examples of

the work of minor painters, such as the practically unknown Scottish painter of the 18th century, H. Smith.

The history of the non-portrait part of the collection is of great interest. The 1st Duke of Sutherland, the George Leveson-Gower mentioned above, who lived from 1758-1833 was a man of great wealth and one of the great collectors of his day. He owned and added to the collection at Stafford House, and joined with his uncle the last Duke of Bridgewater, and his brother-in-law, the Earl of Carlisle, in the purchase of the Orleans Collection. He inherited a life-rent of the Bridgewater Collection after his uncle's death, and this latter part of the collection ultimately passed to his second son, Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, who became the 1st Earl of Ellesmere.

In addition to his interest in old masters, the 1st Duke was an active patron of contemporary artists, and was president of the British Institution. Though few old masters are at Dunrobin there are a number of works, all of which were exhibited in the British Institution in the first quarter of the 19th century which were, presumably, bought from the exhibitors.

Of the small group of 17th century portraits, the most spectacular is the painting of the Irish Chieftain by Michael Wright. This painting, another version of which was purchased recently by the Tate Gallery, shows an Irish Chieftain of c. 1680 dressed 'in the Irish fashion'. Resplendent in red hose, gold slashed doublet, and blue mantle, he stands with his attendant before a romantic landscape, with a curious addition of a suit of 14th or 15th century Japanese armour. The identification of the sitter has not been satisfactorily explained. The traditional name of O'Neill is given, and is inscribed on the collar of the dog in the Tate Gallery version. However this portrait is probably the complement to 'Highland Chieftain' in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, also by Michael Wright, and also unidentified. It is more than probable that Wright painted these as costume pieces, not as portraits. Two other excellent portraits by Wright (three-quarter length) of the Earl and Countess of Bath are also contained in the

collection.

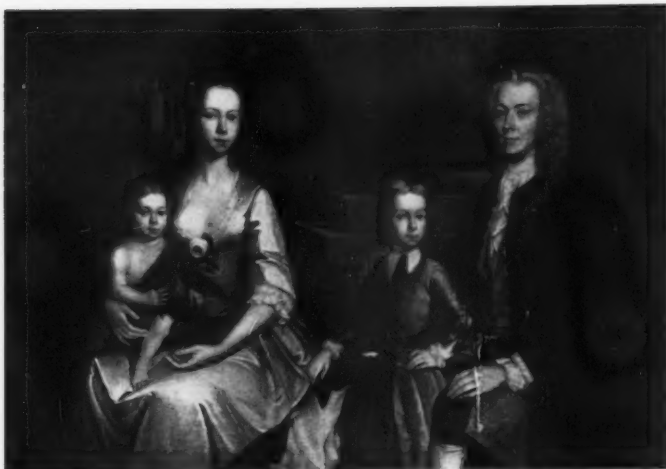
The 18th century is represented by a number of portraits worthy of note. Perhaps the most outstanding is the Portrait of the 17th Earl of Sutherland in Highland regimental dress painted by Allan Ramsay in 1763. Ramsay is said by many to excel in his paintings of women, and that his portraits of men are not so successful. This portrait of the young Earl compares favourably with any male portrait by Ramsay's contemporaries. It is colourful, well composed, and full of dignity. There are several other portraits by Ramsay or his studio. The best of these is a pair of portraits of Willielma Maxwell, later Lady Glenorchy, and Mary Maxwell, later Countess of Sutherland, both painted in 1750, and both charming, intimate portraits of children.

The 18th century school of English portrait painting is represented by two full-length Romneys of the 1st Marquis of Stafford, and of Edward Lord Thurlow, Lord Chancellor. The former is a magnificent portrait in the



MICHAEL WRIGHT

THE IRISH CHIEFTAIN  
Oil on canvas, 90 x 65 ins.



HENRY SMITH

WILLIAM, 16th Earl of Sutherland and  
ELIZABETH, Countess of Sutherland with their children  
*Oil on canvas, 49 x 72 ins.*

grand manner, the subject resplendent in his garter robes stands, almost profile, at a table, with a background of pillars and cloudy sky. The portrait of Lord Thurlow is less dramatic, the body rather heavy and formless, though the head is good, and shows the sitter to be a man of character.

The other 18th century portrait that must be mentioned is the family group of the 16th Earl of Sutherland with his wife and two children painted by H. Smith in 1741. It is a charming piece of portraiture and though stiffly posed is painted with considerable sympathy. Nobody is sure of Smith's identity; signed works covering the 1740s are known but no information has been found to give us any idea of his home or of his training. Stylistically I am inclined to think that he was trained in Scotland, possibly in the studio of Denune, another little known Scottish painter. Smith's recorded works have a very narrow distribution, and his main patrons seem to have been the Earls of

Sutherland and the Earls of Wemyss.

The 19th century portraits are all by English artists and no patronage seems to have been given to Scottish painters in this field. Pride of place is taken by the two portraits by Lawrence, the full length of the 2nd Duchess of Sutherland and her small daughter, Lady Elizabeth Sutherland - Leveson - Gower. It is a work of some dignity and magnificence, but also with a most charming portrayal of a small girl. The other Lawrence is a half length of the 1st Duchess painted in middle age.

Perhaps the most charming of the 19th century portraits is the group of the children of the 1st Duke of Sutherland painted by Thomas Philips about 1806. It is a well composed picture of great clarity of colour.

Outside the field of portraiture the collection is rather uneven; the bulk of the old masters is in the south, and this aspect of the collection is represented by very few works,



THOMAS PHILIPS

CHARLOTTE, ELIZABETH AND LORD FRANCIS GOWER  
*Oil on canvas, 45 x 56 ins.*

the most important being two enormous Canalettos each  $60 \times 100$  ins., and a curious 16th or early 17th century Flemish allegory of the Persecutions of the Low Country Protestants by the Duke of Alva. However this lack is compensated by the large number of subject pictures by British artists purchased from the British Institution and other sources in the early 19th century. They are mainly the work of well known painters but in several cases they demonstrate an unfamiliar aspect of their work. Sir William Beechey, James Northcote, John Opie, George Watson, and Sir Martin Archer Shee, best known as portrait painters, are all represented by subject pieces. John Opie's 'Belisarius' is an admirable, if rather sentimentalised, treatment of the subject, while Northcote's, 'Snake and Vulture' is curious rather than pleasant. If Northcote and Opie were established painters of repute when these pictures were bought in 1807, George Watson can have been little known in the south when his 'Young Female Artist' was bought in 1813. This group of paintings which includes well known names such as Ward and Daniell, and lesser known artists, such as Inskipp, Cranmer and Millichap, is an admirable illustration of the taste of the period and the kind of paintings that can be seen in few public galleries.

The Castle of Dunrobin which houses this collection stands in an imposing position on high ground overlooking the sea just north of Golspie. It is surrounded by wooded parkland and boasts a fine formal garden. The family have been in possession of Dunrobin for centuries—at least since the very beginning of the 15th century. In times past a stronghold at this point must have been not only a refuge in time of war, but also of great strategical importance, placed as it is between the hills and the sea, and commanding the route along the coast.

The earliest form of the castle is not known, but is described in the 17th century as being a tower on a mote. Even as late as the mid-18th century it was probably more suited to defence than comfort. In the background of Smith's



JOHN OPIE

BELISARIUS

*Oil on canvas,  $50 \times 40$  ins.*

family group the castle appears as an austere building, while in the seascape painted by Daniell some eighty years later, and which shows the magnificent position of the castle, it is obvious that in the interval there have been some great changes. In 1846 the castle was again renovated and enlarged, and achieved the present form of a Scots baronial mansion.



WILLIAM DANIELL

DUNROBIN FROM THE SEA

*Oil on canvas,  $33 \times 50$  ins.*

HENRY McLEAN

## JAMES MORRISON



JAMES MORRISON

DOBBIE'S LOAN, GLASGOW  
Oil on canvas, 28 × 50 ins.

JAMES MORRISON was born in 1932, and his childhood was spent in Knightswood—the garden suburb of Glasgow—spacious and in parts hilly, and full of interest for a small boy at this time, for if you climbed Cloberhill Road you could just see the top-most superstructure of the *Queen Mary* lying almost completed in the fitting-out basin, for the bleakness of the depression, the groups at street corners, the marches were now on the ebb. The son of an engineer, whose main hobby was the study of mathematics, it may well be that some of the father's love of detailed precision was passed to his son. James Morrison was educated at Hillhead High School, and at the age of 18 entered the Glasgow School of Art as a student of drawing and painting. He was an industrious worker, ready to converse or to argue, to take part in a game of football, or indulge in horse-play—for he is endowed with a liberal sense of humour—all of which adds up to the fact that

he was a typical student, but with this difference: he had absolutely no desire to be processed into a teacher of art. By the time he had embarked upon his second term he had saved enough money to make a trip to France. Sadly this trip was to be curtailed by the news that his father was dying. James Morrison came home to Glasgow at 20, and to responsibilities that are not usual for so young a man.

Morrison, in a very few years, has recorded Glasgow as it should be recorded. He has chosen absolutely impossible subjects, and painted them well. In his first exhibition held in the McClure Gallery in October, 1956, his largest canvas was *Backcourt—Dobbie's Loan*—a dreich, barren, dust-laden space, the clothes-pros askew, the dirt-encrusted stonework of towering tenements—a scene typical not just of Glasgow, but of almost any large industrial city. I remember his paintings of tenements thrusting into a sharp blue sky, like *Wilton Street*; and a graceful row of terraced houses



in Great Western Road, biscuit in tone, diffused with dusty, under-nourished trees, and with an echo of sad quiet stateliness.

The name, Lowry, may jump to mind. He, too, records the industrial scene, but Lowry peoples his streets, and Morrison does not. The tenements of Morrison have steps, worn towards the centre by the 'tacket boots' of several generations, and you feel that there could have been a movement behind the curtained window of the middle flat.

Once you have seen one of Morrison's paintings, every time you look along a street you see tenements with new interest.

A little over a year ago Mr. Morrison almost went with a group to Spain where he was to have spent some six months painting. Almost at the last minute he and his wife decided to move to the east coast to the little fishing village of Catterline, which lies four miles south of Stonehaven, and about 5 from Inver-



JAMES MORRISON

DERELICT TENEMENTS  
Oil on canvas, 26 x 38 ins.

bervie. He settled in a disused schoolhouse, and it is evident that Morrison has lost none of the industry of his teens. If anything he seems to have increased his potential, for he finds time to teach part-time, and to paint obviously full-time. Recently he has concentrated on a series of fishing boats and landscapes, which are just as individual as his buildings. Last spring, with two other young painters, he held an exhibition in McClure's

Gallery, and here we saw the first of a slightly different Morrison. To an extent the tones of his tenements are repeated in the studies of boats: they are low in tone, but have no sadness of colour. I remember particularly in this exhibition a small panel about 10 x 12 ins. of a boat lying beached in the lee of a dune. It conjured up a humid memory of seaweed and creosote; and the green of the trees on the bank above was low enough in tone to suggest that it had been



JAMES MORRISON

PEEL STREET  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 27 ins.

James Morrison



JAMES MORRISON

BINNEY HOUSE

Oil on canvas, 36 x 50 ins.

painted on a dullish, near-oppressive, summer day. Perhaps in time to come Mr. Morrison will look back on this move to Catterline (if he hasn't already done so) and be satisfied in the knowledge that it was a very wise decision, for he had been painting the Glasgow scene well-nigh continuously, and had accepted and executed several commissions for private individuals before he decided—to use his own words—'to start over again'. For the first six months or so he had a rest-cure of landscape painting, and I think he secretly suffered.

James Morrison left Art School at the age of 22 and immediately became what he had made up his mind to be in his formative years, namely, a painter. He has had a definite measure of success for in the span of five years he has held four exhibitions—three in Glasgow and one in Edinburgh—and his pictures have sold to private collectors, to the Arts Council (*Winter Trees*, 1956) and to the Glasgow Art Gallery (*Binney House*, 1957). To an extent (and only to an extent in Morrison's case) this must be one of the yardsticks of any young painter's mark on society. It's a nice thought to have unkempt hair, and a grimed garret window, but it is infinitely nicer to eat. He has been elected to the Society of Scottish Artists, and his most recent recognition has been the

award of the Torrance Memorial Prize at the 1958 exhibition of the Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts. It might also be mentioned that between painting, teaching, and holding exhibitions, he can still find the time to come down to Glasgow to paint. And somehow it seems quite natural that it should be a tenement. His most recent record of his native city is *Derelict Tenements* which was first exhibited in August of this year at a group show held in the McLellan Galleries. This work was painted on a three-day visit

to Glasgow, and I think Morrison has put on canvas a scene which is by now almost a part of our everyday life. The building was located on the rise to the north-west of Alexandra Parade. It is painted still low in tone, but decidedly sharper and with much more control and dexterity than the pre-Catterline period. He treats the partially demolished tenement with the same broad stroke of his previous works, but there is infinite detail with the absolute minimum of pigment. The building is set a little to the left—gaunt against a sharp, white sky, which is in fact the ground he invariably uses to good advantage. The general facade is black, the central shops—now rent apart—are touched by a wash of alizarin crimson. We know that this building has been dealt almost the final blow. Some of the windows still possess glass, but he seems to have saved the top centre window for special emphasis: here is a room which is quite dead; against the sky-line you can see through the frameless window the dirty washed-out ochre of distempered walls. Was it Velazquez who posed the question, 'Can you paint an empty room?' I would say that Mr. Morrison in this canvas has painted several.

His other painting at the Institute is probably even better. It is a large canvas,

James Morrison

(38 × 50 ins.) of a boat, a well used boat, beached at low tide—again set off centre—a painting possessed of a wealth of colour, and yet limited basically to only four. A background of soft grey, a touch of wet sand to the left-hand corner, the ribs of the boat sharp, black and skeletal, a tangle of carelessly discarded rope—here is the detail, the love of precision which he may have inherited from his father. Four colours predominate: black, ultramarine, raw sienna and merely a wash of crimson. A limited palette, to be sure, but in breadth unlimited.

There are times when he handles oil like water-colour—mere washes—and there for me lies the magic of Morrison's painting. His paint is lucid, his application obviously rapid, as in *Peel Street* a winter landscape painted in February of 1957. A canvas of three colours—ultramarine, yellow ochre and black; the trees stark and leafless recess through and down to the street. In the background is a row of houses which are washed in thin blue, and running at an angle to the right is a tenement, the facade of which is singled out in pure ochre. *Peel Street* is tranquil and breathless like a Sunday morning, yet this canvas was painted complete as it could be in less than a morning.

In spite of the prolific number of tenements that James Morrison has painted, he is in no way typed. His outlook is a catholic one. His strong *Binney House* (purchased by the Glasgow Art Gallery in 1957) was painted at the height of his tenement output. Here is a painting in much higher key—a country house of warm stone, the suggestion of an iron fence, a hedge, a group of trees in winter severity, a field of rough grazing—there is little else, but it is a complete picture, and again a record of any one of the innumerable country houses set in



JAMES MORRISON

HULK AT COVE  
Oil on canvas, 38 × 50 ins.

small estates that are dotted round a thirty mile radius of Glasgow.

James Morrison has overcome serious illness in his youth. At 22 he embarked on the career on which he had settled early in life. He is still on the sunnier side of thirty, and I personally think that given his fair share of good health, there is no barrier that he cannot surmount. Perhaps there is one criticism that I may level at Mr. Morrison—he may be just a little too critical of himself, but after all that may not be a bad thing.

#### COMPLETE SETS OF 'SCOTTISH ART REVIEW'

A few complete sets of the *Scottish Art Review* and the *Illustrated Catalogue of French Paintings*, published by the Association, are available at a cost of £3 10s. 0d. post free. Originally reserved for libraries, the *Scottish Art Review* includes the first four numbers which are now out of print, the Burrell Number which was issued in 1949, the Dali number which was produced in 1952 when the painting, *Christ of St. John of the Cross* was purchased, and the special number devoted to the Scott Collection of Arms and Armour. More recent numbers contain articles on contemporary Scottish painters, including W. G. Gillies, Anne Redpath, John Maxwell and Joan Eardley. Orders should be sent to the Assistant Secretary, Glasgow Art Gallery and Museums Association, Kelvingrove, Glasgow.

HELENE DE GOURLAND

## LOOKING AT A PAINTING BY DEGAS

Madame de Gourland, who is principal Guide-Lecturer to the National Museums of Paris, and well known to members of the Association who recently visited France, comments on the painting in the Burrell Collection *In the Tuileries. The Woman with the Sunshade*.

THERE ARE many facets to the art of Degas, as his work extended over a long period of his life. Born in 1834, he began his artistic career about 1854, worked till 1912 and died in 1917. The number of his paintings and drawings is high and many of his subjects came in series: the world of the race course, ballet girls in dynamic attitudes, laundresses with their professional gestures, milliners with their delicate manipulations, women absorbed in their intimate washing rites.

The picture in question *In the Tuileries: The Woman with the Sunshade* (Oil on canvas) does not belong to any of the sequences painted by the artist. It is, we believe, the only instance showing a lady sauntering in a garden. Judging by her headgear, we are able to determine the date of this work, as it is well known that Degas and his fellow painters made it their obligation to represent not bygone times but their own. Thus the lady wears a bonnet with a flowery crest on top and ribbons drooping behind, after the fashion of the eighties. The velvet ribbon round her neck is also in harmony with the period, as well as the small parasol she holds up with her fingertips.

Yet it is not intended to convey information on Parisian elegance in the Tuileries. Documentary, literary or narrative motives are not the real concern of Degas. His aim is observation of the play of light and shadow as well as of movement.

Because of the artist's preference for in-doors or artificial light effects, it is unusual for him to represent, as in this case, a typically 'plein-air' subject. In fact his art here follows the Impressionists' idea whose gospel was the mastering in their pictures of natural light and especially that of the sun. But the difference between the orthodox Impressionists and Degas is that the former shunned black in every way, while Degas' black sunshade focuses most of our attention. When scrutinising this dark parasol one may discover in it russet tints produced by the sun glinting through the material. As a con-

sequence the shadow cast on the woman's face changes its natural complexion, tanning it with dark hues. Yet here and there dots of light are dancing between the eyebrows, on the upper lip, on the chin, and a luminous line follows the jaw as far as the ear which also bears shiny spots. The purest light, not intercepted by the sunshade, appears on the woman's throat. We notice also the pale skin of her palm through the opening of her black glove.

Looking closely at the picture one is aware that it somewhat resembles a sketch, as the forms shaped by the brush are not always quite precise. There are even areas of blue and red which are nothing more than chromatic patches intended to enliven the sombre harmony. The technique itself does not consist in an opaque impasto and the canvas shows often through the pigment, as for instance on the top of the bodice. The same methods have been used by Degas in a series of his pastels after 1900. *The Woman with the Sunshade* is a work rather close to these latter productions.

Another feature of the work also may be pointed out: the movement of the lady, obvious enough to draw our interest. It expresses daintiness and also a purpose: in a somewhat affected way and conscious of her attitude, the woman leans slightly forward, lowering her eyes as if selecting a place to tread on the gravel and sand. Yet all this happens without our seeing more than her bust. The abrupt cutting off by the frame is characteristic of Degas. He suggests more than he shows, this being subtly complimentary to the beholder who is supposed to realise the instantaneous movement of the person and the flickering of changing lights as she makes a step towards the trees.

It has often been said that Degas' style belongs more to Classicism than to Impressionism, but here, in this picture, he is, though in his own way, a true Impressionist.

Now, something in this canvas shows our artist reaching beyond this style. The horizon line is high, unlike the traditional perspective followed even by Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro. The painter creates not depth, but a background, and thus the composition remains flat. The origin of such a conception comes from the Japanese whose prints passed from hand to hand during the second half of the 19th century. Degas in *The Woman with the Sunshade* makes us gain a glimpse of further developments in Western art, later on unswervingly pursued by Cézanne and, nowadays, being one of the most striking features of our contemporary paintings.



DEGAS

IN THE TUILERIES: THE WOMAN WITH THE SUNSHADE

*Oil on canvas, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 8 ins.*

*Burrell Collection*





THE VISITATION

in height, although they might reach a length of anything up to eight yards or so, and comprise a sequence of many different scenes along which the eye could travel until the end of the story, like a Chinese scroll.

Contemporary records show that these Swiss tapestries were chiefly carried out by women working in small workshops, a number of which might be under the same direction, in convents or in private houses. In addition to these written records, there are a few drawings and woodcuts showing work in progress on the simple handlooms in current use.

The term 'Heidnischwerk' (heathen work) is an odd term to describe an altar frontal and requires some explanation. Originally it was applied to the products of the Swiss workshops because many of them imitated in wool more costly fabrics from the East. These Saracenic models

WILLIAM WELLS

## SWISS ALTAR FRONTAL

“EIN JUNKFROW die vor einem bildner sitzt und heidenschwerk wirkt, die den bildner stet'gs ansicht und noch im wirkt”. (A young woman who sits in front of a picture and weaves heathen work, who looks at the picture every now and again and works from it).

Thus does Geiler von Kaisersberg in his *Christlichen Pilgerschaft* describe the making of the kind of tapestry reproduced in colour here, one of the finest and best preserved of all these charming Swiss altar frontals of the 15th century, of which there are numerous examples in the Burrell Collection.

In contrast to the mammoth hangings intended to decorate castles and cathedrals produced in the great manufacturing centres of northern Europe, most of the German and Swiss tapestries are relatively small, at least



Colour illustrations:

Four scenes from the Life of the Virgin  
Swiss Altar Frontal (c. 1470) on one continuous  
strip 2 feet 9½ ins. × 8 feet 1½ ins.

Left: DETAIL OF THE CHILD IN THE CRIB

Above: DETAIL OF DOMINICAN NUN



THE NATIVITY

THE ADORATION

were abstract in design, but the term was retained to describe the figured products of the Swiss looms even when the subject-matter was Christian. The looms were known as 'Heidnischwerkrämen', the women weavers as 'Heidnischwerkerinnen', and the cartoons from which they wove as 'Heidnischwerkbilden'. In addition to wool, linen threads were used for details such as finger and toe nails and the whites of eyes, and during the last quarter of the 15th century there was a sparing use of silk and occasionally silver thread. The cartoons, which seem to have been either drawn or painted, have all been lost, but they are frequently mentioned in the house inventories preserved in the Basle state archives, often in association with looms. In the workshops the same cartoon was used many times, but usually with a different colour scheme, unless made in accordance with a special commission.

Besides the altar frontals or antependiums, long strips of tapestry were woven as dorsals (Banktücher) to be hung on the wall behind benches for protection from draughts and whitewash, and there were a number of domestic uses to which these attractive products were put, such as bed, divan and table spreads, as well as cushion and pillow covers. A notable example of the latter in The Burrell Collection is the 'Woman riding to the market with all her belongings', also a product of the Basle looms, which has been reproduced on a number of occasions. The subject matter of these secular tapestries is drawn from folklore and contemporary romances and satires.

The Burrell altar frontal representing 'The Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi and the Presentation in the Temple' on one continuous strip was first described by Dr. Betty Kurth in a German periodical

*continued on page 27*



THE PRESENTATION



L. S. LOWRY

V. E. CELEBRATIONS  
Oil on canvas, 31 x 40 ins.

*Detail of Figures on opposite page*

## LAURENCE STEPHEN LOWRY

AT THE age of seventy-one, L. S. Lowry has just been having a one-man show of his paintings in London—part of the normal pattern in the life of a successful artist, you may think, but success came very late to Lowry. He was fifty-one before attaining any significant public recognition, and in spite of these last twenty years he is still an unusual and retiring figure whose work defies easy classification.

Lowry was the son of an estate agent and was twenty-one before he decided that he had only one overriding purpose in life—to paint his vision of the streets and houses and people in the Manchester districts around him. Two years' study at Manchester School of Art were followed by many years of quiet living and dedicated work, living with his parents first at suburban Rusholme and later at Station Road, Pendlebury. Indeed for thirty years Lowry worked away at his painting, living a kind of hermit life, without recognition, without encouragement, without the stimulus of critical appraisal. The story, from 1938 onwards is, by comparison, a fairy story.

It was in 1938 that Alexander Reid, kindest and most knowledgeable of dealers, happened to see at Bourlet's the framers, several paintings by Lowry. As his agents, Bourlet's sent these paintings to exhibitions and almost invariably collected them back—unsold. Reid's interest was aroused and he took the trouble to seek out and examine as many works by Lowry as he could find. The late Duncan Macdonald, Reid's partner, was equally impressed, and the practical outcome was a show of Lowry's paintings at the Lefevre Gallery in 1939. There was another exhibition in 1943, and there have been others since.

A short film has been produced showing the painter's background, his subjects, and his methods of working. Television appearances have had their usual

effect of making the man known to millions. Lowry may be more articulate in paint than in words, but his personality is known on a national scale, and many people have a sympathetic regard for this shy, awkward, unpretentious man who had an eye for the graphic possibilities of his Manchester environment, and a capacity amounting to genius for translating this somewhat unlikely material into something rich and strange.

Just what does Lowry stand for? His early exhibitions caught the critics off-guard. They found it difficult to fit him into one or other of the categories of French derivation which offered convenient compartments for most of their assessments. He just did not fit. He was a home product unalloyed, and it was Mr. Maurice Collis who boldly made the claim, in 1942, that Lowry was, in fact, an English 'Little Master' in his own right, and owing little to foreign influences. This claim has steadily gained support.

"While critics and patrons have been fuddling away their time with fancy gentlemen, smart at serving up the latest receipt from abroad, he has been quietly working in urban Lancashire, perfecting his own style





L. S. LOWRY

RIVER SCENE

Oil on canvas,  $18\frac{1}{2} \times 25\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

and transforming, in the way only a genuine artist can transform, a reality of back streets, ragamuffins, courtyards, football, towpaths, and tenements into feeling and beauty. . . . The construction of his street scenes is instinctive and subtle; their multitudinous figures, thrown on apparently haphazard, form a pattern actually quite balanced, a balance not only of design but of colour. Nor is this figure-pattern a mannerism: you do not hear the creaking of any machine; the synthesis is new each time; it is more an intuitive than a reasoned construction . . . ."

Collis strongly rejects suggestions made by other critics that Lowry is a 'primitive'. The painter's attitude may be uncomplicated and his choice of subject unusual, but his technical equipment is impressive. He draws powerfully in paint: his compositions are well-arranged and satisfying; his colour is attractive; his interpretations are full of acute observation. His whole approach is one of accomplished and controlled method and not one of inspired effects gained in spite of technical shortcomings.

Glasgow is fortunate in the possession of two very good examples of the work of Laurence Stephen Lowry. The larger, entitled *V. E. Celebrations* (reproduced in colour on page 20) was purchased in 1946, and shows a vast number of figures against the now well-known background of industrial Lancashire, interpreted in the personal idiom of the painter, and especially bedecked with innumerable flags for this very special occasion. The other painting, *River Scene*, was purchased as early as 1942, and shows a rather bleak but attractively designed landscape with a river mouth, the river winding among the houses, factory buildings and the semi-derelict waste land of such a setting. Once again there are many figures shown.

It is in his understanding of the Manchester scene, in his appreciation of the human values involved, his spontaneous mastery of his medium, and in his subdued but pleasing colour—it is in these human and graphic qualities that we look for justification of the claim that Lowry is indeed an English 'Little Master'.



## A VISIT TO ANGERS

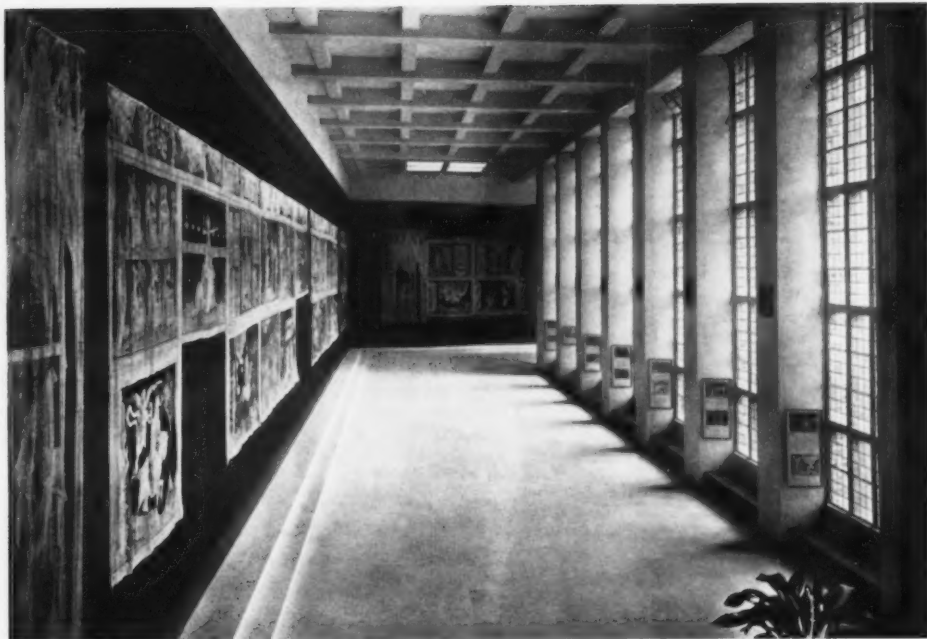
Since 1956 the Association has been organising tours abroad. There is no special lead-up to these visits, no advance series of lectures. They are open to all members of the Association and all that is asked is a pleasure in looking at magnificent works of art—the keener the better. The guides are curators or lecturers attached to the various galleries abroad. The members are expected to have enough strength of character not to allow the ambitious programme prepared by the Assistant Secretary to come between them and the enjoyment of their holiday. They usually do have. In August a group of 30 members of the Association visited Paris. With the Burrell Collection in mind, particularly the stained glass and the tapestries, it was decided to see as many memorable examples of the art of the Middle Ages as possible, and it was felt that it was worth while travelling 300 miles to see the Apocalypse Tapestries at Angers.

NONE had prepared us for the wonders of Angers. The 13th century castle, bristling with towers and surrounded by a moat, is all that a castle should be. As we passed over the drawbridge we were welcomed by the Curator and his wife, Monsieur and Madame Enguehard—warmly welcomed, for it seemed that we are only the second group from Britain to journey to Angers to see the 14th century Apocalypse Tapestries in the gallery specially built to house them in 1954. When it became known that we carried with us photographs of two fragments of the Tapestries, which have found their way into the Burrell Collection, a wave of excitement passed from Monsieur and Madame Enguehard, and eventually surrounded all the staff. The photographs were passed from hand to hand—the girls at the sales counter, the attendants, the curators—all were invited to share in the delight of discovery, while the Glasgow Group stood by feeling very proud indeed to 'belong to Glasgow'. When the excitement died down a little we were led into the long, cool gallery, and to the first sharp visual impression of the reds and blues of the magnificent tapestries. Through Monsieur Enguehard's lecture, which was admirably translated by Madame Enguehard, there ran like a theme the



THE CASTLE OF ANGERS (above) South-West Towers and (below) exterior of Apocalypse Gallery.





THE APOCALYPSE GALLERY built in 1954 to house the Tapestries.

fragments from the Burrell Collection: the colour, the texture, the decoration of the background, the landscape, the angel's wings, all were studied in relation first to each of the seven sets of tapestries; and then to the fourteen tapestries contained in each set; and finally to the lost tapestries. We had the pleasure of watching a scholar at work—considering, accepting, rejecting, while he 'placed' the fragments within the fabric; we listened to the story of the tapestries, which is woven into the history of France, and is as colourful as the wools used by the weavers; and we looked at the tapestries—these magnificent presentations of the Revelations of St. John, which are having a tremendous influence on the art of our own day. They have an instantaneous appeal—so much so that it is difficult to believe that, as works of art, they were rejected for almost one hundred years; they were offered for sale and found no buyer; and eventually they were classified as of so little value that a 'practical' use had to be found for them.

From the evidence of a note in a library inventory, and the payment of three accounts, it is known that the Tapestries were commissioned about 1373 by the Duke Louis I of Anjou; that he employed the Parisian weaver, Nicolas Bataille and the painter, Jean of Bruges; and he borrowed from his brother, King Charles V an illuminated manuscript of the Apocalypse. The tapestries, which are said to measure 740 square yards, were completed by 1380. They are the earliest French tapestries to survive to the present day.

History is not very sympathetic to Louis of Anjou. He has been described as coarse, lacking in humanity, unscrupulous. How then did he come to choose the Revelations of St. John as the subject of this great work?

"We shall never understand the Middle Ages until we realise how profoundly they strove to find a deeper meaning, a sacred significance in all things. They never forgot, as has been said, that all things would be absurd if their meaning

were exhausted in their function and place in the phenomenal world, if by their essence they did not reach into a world beyond this."

And how truly in this respect is Louis of Anjou a man of his times, and how perfect the choice of the Revelations, with the prophecies and mysteries which are given fresh interpretations by every age.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake to me, and being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks."

The artist, Jean of Bruges, and the weaver, Nicolas Bataille, on the other hand, did not have to concern themselves with interpretations. With great simplicity they present against a blue background, seven lighted candles in golden candlesticks, bushes with flowers like flames, and in the foreground the figure of Christ with a sword in His mouth, and the kneeling figure of St. John. And it is probably this very simplicity which makes the tapestries so attractive to us. There are seven sets of tapestries; each set contains fourteen tapestries (in two registers of seven); along the top there is a band representing the sky with angels and birds, and along the foot one representing the earth with flowers, foliage and rabbits. The backgrounds of the tapestries are alternately blue and red, so that as well as providing areas of rich colour in bold contrast to the delicate tones of the figures and landscape, they simplify the presentation of the text. And as one walks along the gallery the book with the seven seals opens; the seven trumpets sound; the seven angels and the seven plagues appear; Babylon falls; and finally there is the vision of the 'New Jerusalem'. And because these tapestries are works of art

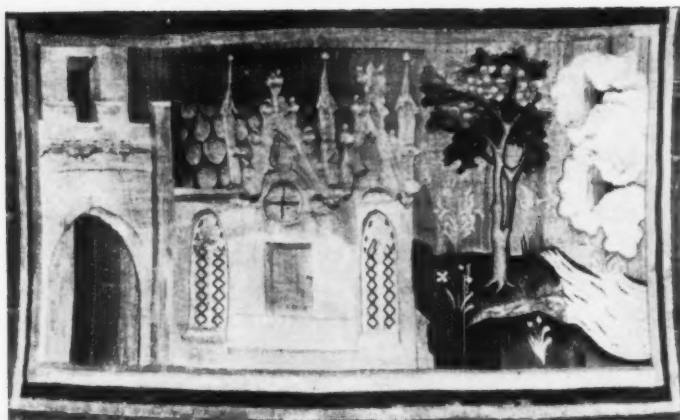


ST. MICHAEL AND THE ANGELS FIGHTING THE DRAGON  
Castle of Angers Collection

*Apocalypse Tapestry, c. 1379*

it is possible to appreciate them without reference to the text, for their colour, vitality, design, wealth of detail; each is complete in itself. It is the tremendous flexibility of Jean of Bruges and Nicolas Bataille which is so impressive: their ability to mould their talent scrupulously round a set theme; to please their patron, the Duke of Anjou; and at the same time to create a work of art.

The tapestry, *St. Michael and the Angels fighting the Dragon* was drawn specially to the attention of the group by Monsieur Enguehard. Here the quiet figure of St. John contrasts with the vitality of the angels. The delicate pink, green, and blue wings, and the yellow and white robes of the angels have a light airiness in contrast to the blue of the sky, and the deeper blue of the quatrefoil decoration. This tapestry, which is in the fourth set, marks a departure from the plain backgrounds of the earlier tapestries. Those that follow are decorated with flowers and foliage, and it was thus possible for Monsieur Enguehard to place immediately one of the fragments from the Burrell Collection in the earlier group, and one in the later. Finally he gave it as his opinion that the fragment showing the church probably belonged to the second set,



GOthic CHURCH

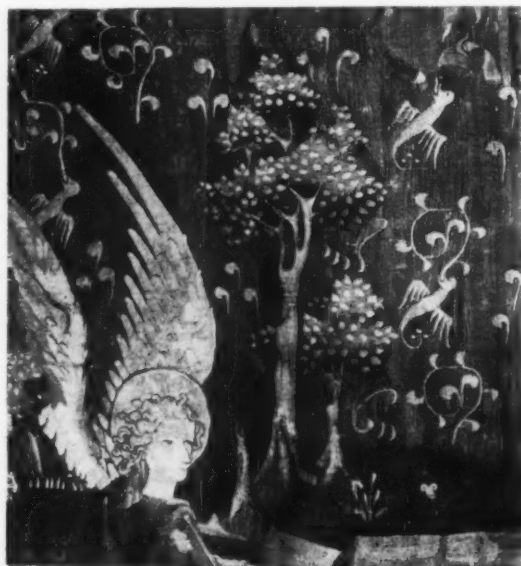
*Fragment from Apocalypse Tapestry, 28 x 44½ ins.  
Burrell Collection*

and the angel fragment to the sixth set. But how did they come to be in the Burrell Collection?

For one hundred years the Tapestries remained with the Anjou family, and were considered as among their most precious possessions. When Duke René I was forced to leave Anjou and live in Provence, he wished the tapestries to remain in Angers, and he bequeathed them to the Cathedral, but it was not until 1490—ten years after his death—that the actual transfer was completed. For almost three hundred years they were treasured by the Cathedral. They were exhibited only on Feast Days, or on special occasions such as the visit of a king, or the enthronement of a bishop. But gradually, towards the end of the 18th century, when Gothic work became unfashionable, they fell into disfavour. The first faint cloud of disapproval appeared in 1767 when it was decided that these wonderful tapestries, when hung in the Cathedral, muffled the sound of the voices. In 1782 the Chapter offered the whole set for sale, but no purchaser could be found and, much against their will, the canons were forced to keep them. During the Revolution 'practical' uses were found for these 'encumbrances': some were cut up and used as linings for curtains; others as bed hangings; a few were removed to the greenhouses to protect the orange

trees against the cold; and in the Bishop's stables strips were used to cushion the stalls and protect the horses from bruises. In 1843 the Administration finally declared those that remained to be of no further use, and they were sold for 300 francs (about £50 in present day values) to the Bishop of Angers, Monsignor Angebault, who later presented them to the Cathedral. By this time Gothic Art was coming back into favour and

ultimately 77 out of a probable 105 pieces were collected. Some fragments, like those in the Burrell Collection, found their way into private ownership. By the end of the 19th century the whole of the Cathedral was hung from top to bottom, and from end to end with the tapestries. But they were not to remain there permanently. By a later decree they



ANGEL

*Fragment from Apocalypse Tapestry, 36 x 33 ins.  
Burrell Collection*

were declared to be the property of the State, and were removed to the Bishop's Palace, and here they remained until 1952 in a building which was so small that only a quarter of the tapestries could be shown, and examined only with difficulty as the light was so poor.

Today the tapestries have returned to the Château of Angers where Louis of Anjou first displayed them. The Bishop of Angers 'for the glory of French culture' in an agreement with the Ministry of Education renounced his claim to show the Tapestries permanently in the Cathedral, and only a few are shown

there part of the year. A modern gallery in keeping with the mediaeval architecture of the castle has been built for them by Monsieur Bernard Vitry, Chief Architect of the Department of Historic Monuments, and since 1954 it has been possible to see all the remaining tapestries under perfect conditions of light and space. Reproductions of the Illustrated Manuscript borrowed by Louis of Anjou from his brother are shown beside the Tapestries. Outside in the wonderful gardens are growing flowers similar to those woven into the tapestries. And in the Museum devoted to information on the 'lost' tapestries are photographs of the two fragments in the Burrell Collection.

SWISS ALTAR FRONTAL—continued from page 19

(Pantheon, June, 1931). At that time it was in the possession of a German dealer, but apparently it had come to him from a British collection, so that by acquiring it for The Burrell Collection, Sir William, it might be claimed, was exerting the rights of adoption. Both Dr. Kurth and Heinrich Gobel, author of the most complete history of tapestry weaving, considered it an outstanding product of Basle, the leading centre of Heidnischwerk in Switzerland, both from the point of design and colour and of preservation. There could indeed hardly be imagined a more perfect rendering of the Christmas story. Sometimes the separate scenes on these strip tapestries were divided by pilasters, but a more favoured device were the swinging scrolls which thus served the double function of a commentary and a fluid partition, as on the left and right sides of this tapestry, where the appropriate biblical texts enclose or partially enclose the Visitation and the Presentation. The two central scenes are left without a formal division with the curious result that St. Joseph as a spectator of both the Nativity and the Adoration of the Kings stands beside himself. Above the improvised crib in which the infant Christ lies adored by the Virgin, angels, and the cow and ass, takes place the Annunciation to the Shepherds, and below, on a considerably smaller scale, is the kneeling figure of a Dominican nun, who, it is thought,

probably represents either the donor or the weaver of the tapestry. A similar figure occurs on a closely related tapestry in the Museum at Basle portraying three scenes from the life of Christ with two pairs of saints to right and left, the ones on the right where this figure appears all being of the Dominican order, a strong indication that this tapestry derives from a Dominican convent in Basle. On the right of the Basle tapestry occurs the coat of arms of the family Schönkind, several members of which are mentioned in the records of the Klingental convent, either as benefactors or nuns, and the Dominican nun was, in fact, identified by R. F. Burckhardt in his catalogue of the Basle tapestries as Anastasia Schönkind who occurs in the records of between 1452 and 1475 as 'Sister Stesslin'. Our Burrell tapestry has no coat of arms to make an identification of this kind possible, but the probability is that it derives from the same convent. A further point of interest arising from a comparison of the two tapestries now in Basle and Glasgow is that one of the scenes represented on the Basle one is also the Presentation in the Temple. Burckhardt pointed out that the designer of the cartoon modelled this scene and the Entry into Jerusalem on the woodcut illustrations in the *Spiegel menschlicher Behaltis*, published in Speyer by Peter Drach between 1476 and 1480, which in all likelihood was also the source used by the designer of our tapestry.



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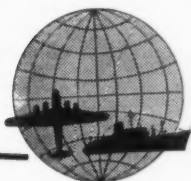
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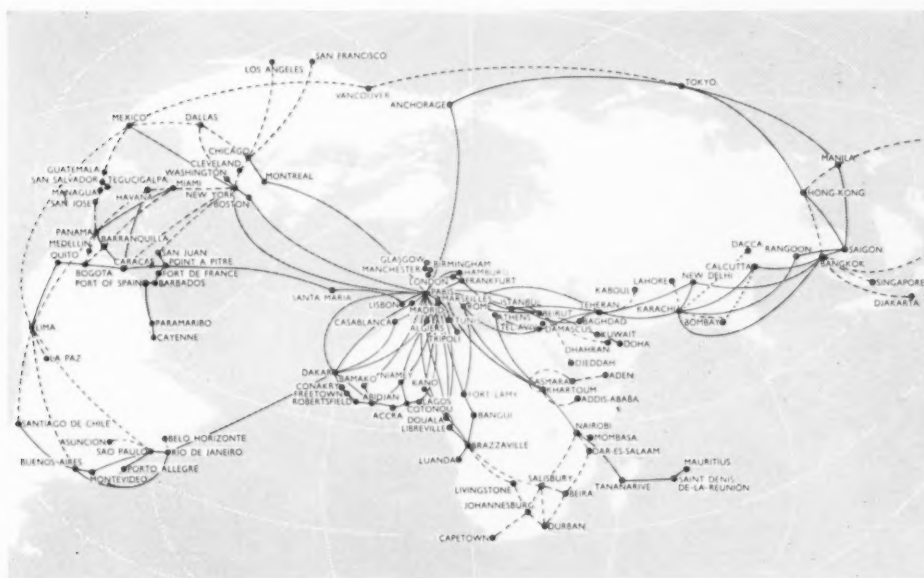
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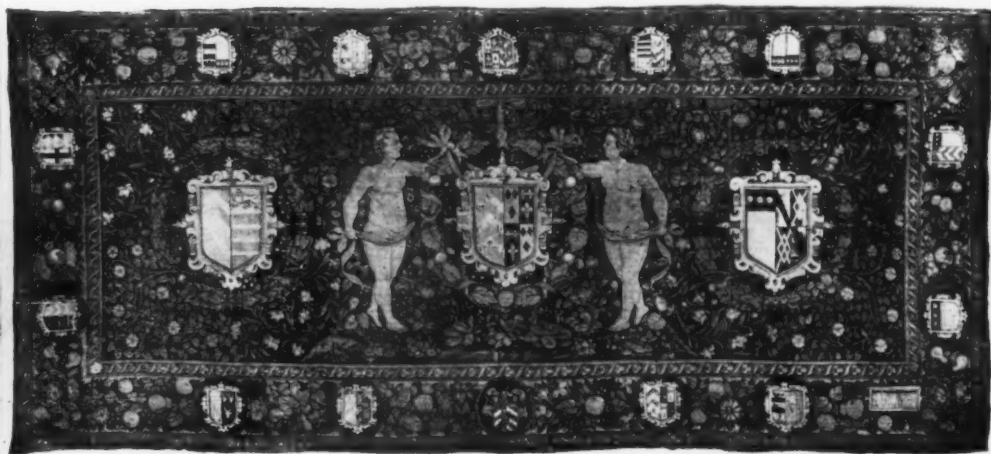
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